

First, and Last, of Its Kind

It may surprise many in Duxbury to know that FarFar's burnt down last week.

No, not the St. George Street location – which is just fine – but the FarFar's in Issaquah, Washington, one of the many Danish ice cream stores that was an offspring of the original Duxbury location.

Last week's fire means that the first FarFar's is now the last and the only place across the nation to get that delicious home-made ice cream.

According to owner Andra Carleton, at its peak in the late 1980s, there were about 21 FarFar's in states such as Maine, New Hampshire, Arizona and Oregon, but she said that the family never intended for the business to become franchised.

"We had never been in the ice cream business when we started 25 years ago and it just evolved," she said.

The growth began when friends of the family from Cape Elizabeth, Maine, visited Duxbury and said how great a similar store would do up north. The same feeling came from Carleton's brother, who wanted to open one where he lived in Washington and from another set of friends from Tucson, Arizona.

So Carleton called upon the one person who showed her the ropes and could do the same for others, her father, Walter Simonsen. In fact, FarFar's is named for him, as it is the Danish word for "grandfather."

So FarFar's eventually opened in those towns with her father's guidance on how to make quality homemade ice cream and Carleton said it was her brother's location in Washington that really sparked the most interest and led to other stores within the state.



The St. George Street FarFar's is the last in the country following a fire that destroyed a similar store in Issaquah, Washington.

By 1986, said Carleton, there were 21 FarFar's and that was also about the time the store got out of the franchising business. Once the stores were up and running, she said, they were pretty much on their own. Over the years, however, the stores have either closed, succumbed to competitors or switched owners, such as the one in Issaquah had done.

"We really had no connection with that store as it has changed owners four or five times," said Carleton. "The only connection we had was from people who had been to the one in Washington and said how nice the people were who ran it."

Carleton said that FarFar's expansion years ago was not as big as it may sound, but that she and her family are proud of what happened and look forward to a big 25th year celebration this year at the one, and now only, FarFar's.

"It all started here and the recipes haven't changed," she said.

- KEITH L. MARTIN